

'Grass Roots' "Turf Tips" - Fall Lawn Renovation and Rejuvenation

Early October is a great time for renovating and rejuvenating your cool-season lawn. With cooler days upon us in the northern half of the country, it's time to help your lawn recover from summer stress and get a jump on next spring.

- Core aerify high foot traffic areas. This involves using an aerifier which pokes holes in the soil and pulls small plugs of soil. Aerification helps to get more air into the soil, relieves compaction caused by foot traffic, and will allow rain and irrigation water to infiltrate more efficiently. The aerification holes also provide a protected place for new grass seed to germinate.
- Use a vertical mower (or "de-thatcher") to thatch your lawn if you have ½" or more of thatch build-up. Thatch is the layer of the grass made up of decomposing stems and other tissue between the green leaves of the plant and the actual soil. You can also use a thatcher to remove any dead plant material from areas that have worn out over the summer.
- Use improved varieties of seed to overseed thin or worn areas in conjunction with aerification or thatching. More information about grass varieties suited for your part of the country can be found at the National Turfgrass Evaluation Program website (www.ntep.org)
- Once you have planted new grass seed, irrigate just enough to keep the seed moist. Using a topdressing cover such as compost will help keep the seed from drying out and lead to better germination.
- Overseeding in fall is a great way to get a jump on next spring and helps make a denser turf stand that can better crowd out weeds!

